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# INFORMATION



## QUETICO Provincial Park Master Plan Review 1982



Ministry of  
Natural  
Resources

Ontario

Provincial  
Parks  
Council



Ontario





Ministry of  
Natural  
Resources

Your file:

Our file:

108 Saturn Avenue  
Atikokan, Ontario  
POT 1C0

January, 1983

Dear Plan Review Participant:

SUBJECT: Quetico Provincial Park Master Plan/Five Year Review

The Honourable Alan W. Pope, Minister of Natural Resources, has responded to the recommendations made by The Provincial Parks Council concerning the future management of Quetico Provincial Park. The council's recommendations reflect the issues expressed in the approximately fourteen hundred public submissions and briefs which it considered as part of the first five-year review of the Quetico Provincial Park master plan. Both the recommendations and the response are contained in the attached for your information.

The Minister's response will be used in the preparation of a document to be entitled Quetico Provincial Park Master Plan - Revised Management Policies 1982 which will replace the policy section of the existing plan approved in 1977. This document will be available to the public during the summer of this year.

The master plan, so revised, will guide the management of Quetico until the next review is undertaken.

On behalf of the Minister and the Chairman of The Provincial Parks Council, I wish to express my appreciation for your contribution to the review programme. I am confident that the revised master plan will ensure the protection of Quetico's provincially significant landscape and the quality of the wilderness recreation opportunities the park provides.


Thank you again for your participation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "A. M. Harjula".

A. M. Harjula  
District Manager  
Atikokan District





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## QUETICO PROVINCIAL PARK MASTER PLAN REVIEW 1982

The Minister of Natural Resources response to the recommendations  
of the Ontario Provincial Parks Council.

Release Date:  
January, 1983



Ministry of  
Natural  
Resources

Hon. Alan W. Pope  
Minister  
W. T. Foster  
Deputy Minister





## The Quetico Provincial Park Master Plan

The master plan for Quetico Provincial Park was approved in September, 1977 by the then Minister of Natural Resources, the Honourable Frank S. Miller. It was the culmination of a planning process which was initiated in 1970 with the government's appointment of the Quetico Provincial Park Advisory Committee. In 1972, on the basis of an extensive public participation program, the Advisory Committee submitted its recommendations to the Minister of Natural Resources. On June 21, 1973, the Minister announced to the Ontario Legislature that the government had accepted the Advisory Committee's recommendations concerning Quetico Provincial Park. Subsequently, the master planning process was initiated with the previously approved recommendations providing the foundation for many of the decisions ultimately expressed in the master plan released in September, 1977.

### Why a Review ?

Through the approval of a master plan the government expresses its intentions, in the form of policies, as to the manner in which a park will be planned, developed and managed over a period of time.

The periodic review of a master plan is an important stage in the park planning process. Master plans are considered to span an implementation period of some twenty years. Thus, reviews provide an opportunity not only to evaluate progress made, but also to ensure that the plan remains current and relevant. Traditionally, the review is undertaken at each five - year interval following the approval of a master plan.

### The Review Process

During the summer of 1981, the Ministry of Natural Resources initiated the first five - year review of the Quetico Provincial Park Master Plan.

To assist and encourage public involvement in the review, an information package was widely distributed. More specifically, the information package:

- described the development of the Quetico Provincial Park Master Plan, the review process and how the public could participate;
- discussed selected policies from the 1977 master plan which were considered to be of interest or concern to the public and the Ministry; and,
- provided a detailed summary of each policy statement in the master plan and any corresponding revisions or additions being proposed by the Ministry.

During the review, Ministry staff were assisted by the Provincial Parks Council, a citizen's advisory committee to the Minister of Natural Resources. The specific role of the Council in the review process was:

- to review and evaluate background information and to assist the Ministry in the preparation of the information package;
- to co - host a public consultation process related to the master plan review in conjunction with Ministry staff; and
- to evaluate public input and prepare recommendations on the master plan policies and implementation program including directions for the future.

### Public Consultation Program

The Provincial Parks Council and Ministry of Natural Resources staff travelled to Atikokan, Fort Frances, Thunder Bay and Toronto during August, September and October of 1981 to meet with members of the public interested in the Quetico Master Plan review. An informal "open house", followed by a public meeting, was scheduled for each location. The afternoon and early evening open house segments were hosted by Ministry staff who answered specific questions concerning the park, and provided any additional information requested by those in attendance. Displays were set up to provide pertinent information related to the review of the park master plan.



The public meetings, which followed on the same evenings, were hosted by the Provincial Parks Council. During the meetings, the Council received and recorded written and verbal submissions on any aspect of the master plan and the management of Quetico.

The meeting schedule was as follows:

<u>Place</u>	<u>Date</u>
Atikokan	Monday, August 24, 1981
Fort Frances	Tuesday, August 25, 1981
Thunder Bay	Thursday, August 27, 1981
Toronto	Thursday, September 24, 1981
Thunder Bay	Thursday, October 22, 1981

In addition to participating in the open houses or meetings, interested members of the public were also invited to forward comments expressing their views directly to the Chairman of the Parks Council.

In total, the Council received some 1400 submissions which identified some 94 park management issues. On this basis, the Council formulated 14 recommendations which were forwarded to the Minister of Natural Resources in December of 1981 for his consideration. The Minister's response to the Council's recommendations and the proposed revisions in Section 3 of the information package will provide the basis for a document to be entitled Quetico Provincial Park - Revised Management Policies, 1982, which upon approval, will replace the policy section of the existing master plan. This document will be available in 1983. The master plan, so revised, will guide the management of Quetico Provincial Park until the next review.

### Provincial Parks Council Recommendations and the Minister of Natural Resources Response

Council in reporting to the Minister of Natural Resources, endorsed the concept of the five year reviews as an essential element in updating management and providing for public input in such as the management of Quetico Provincial Park. Council also noted that it could not help but be impressed by the general respect, admiration and almost reverence expressed not only for the beauty of Quetico, but for its current management, by members of the general public.

The Minister in response stated that, *"as recognized by Council, master plans must be sensitive to change and must be kept current and relevant. The review process provides a mechanism for modifying management policies as may be necessary. At the present time, the five year interval between reviews of the Quetico Master Plan seems appropriate, particularly when matters such as a location for an eastern ranger station remain undecided. Following resolution of these types of matters, the interval between reviews and the process followed may be modified."*

Council received, throughout the review, representations with respect to logging in Quetico Provincial Park. Council expressed to the Minister that they had no hesitation in supporting the continued exclusion of logging from Quetico Provincial Park. Council expressed the position that if fibre were to be removed in the future from Quetico Provincial Park and made available for utilization by local forest industries, it must be as a result of the development and application of a management plan as referred to in Council's recommendation No. 7 and not in spite of the master plan and management plans developed thereunder.

The Minister in response reiterated *"that the Government's position, stated on May 13, 1971 with respect to commercial logging, has not changed and that this form of resource extraction is considered to be inconsistent with the management philosophy of a wilderness park. Encouraging the growth and development of the tourism industry in northwestern Ontario, in part through the continued commitment to maintain Quetico in its wilderness state, is a belief of Council's that I share."*

Council did not oppose the recommended revisions as set out in Section 3 of the information package not specifically affected by recommendations made by Council.

The Minister in response *"noted that Council supported all of the revisions suggested to the public through the master plan review information package unless specifically identified through the recommendations submitted on December 4, 1981. These revisions, along with those of Council's which have been accepted, will be implemented as an outcome of this review process."*

Council's specific recommendations and the Minister of Natural Resources response are as set out. The Parks Council attached no positions of priority with respect to its recommendations with the exception of recommendation No. 13 to which it attached a first in priority.





## Recommendation No. 1 :

Council resolved to recommend to the Minister of Natural Resources that :

- a) the current interior access zones for Quetico Provincial Park at French Lake, Lac La Croix, Cache Bay and Prairie Portage be maintained;
- b) to facilitate use of Quetico Provincial Park by Ontario residents and outfitters, the establishment of a float plane corridor from the north to Prairie Portage, together with appropriate landing facilities;
- c) the additional access to Quetico Provincial Park continue to be provided through the external ranger station at Nym Lake, and the ranger station at Beaverhouse Lake.

Minister's Response :

a) *Accepted.*

b) *Not accepted.*

*Permitting aircraft landings at Prairie Portage would be inconsistent with the wilderness management intent of eliminating all forms of mechanized travel from within Quetico, as outlined in the Master Plan.*

*Aircraft access to the waters immediately adjacent to the southern portion of the park is provided at Lac La Croix and Saganaga Lake.*

c) *Accepted with the following clarification.*

*The Beaverhouse Lake access zone will incorporate the existing ranger station location. Upgrading of vehicle parking facilities will be completed in conjunction with improvements to the access road.*

## Recommendation No. 2 :

Council resolved to recommend to the Minister of Natural Resources that :

- a) a preferential quota system be established with 60 % of the entry quotas reserved for Ontario residents or Ontario outfitters up to one week before the entry date;
- b) in light of the fact that the short term reservation system initiated in 1981 enabled Ontario outfitters to better serve their canoe parties, to continue the short term reservation system, if, for administrative reasons, it is desirable to have reservations received three weeks prior to the entry date ;
- c) the quota for Mack Lake be increased to allow better visitor distribution to the easterly boundary of Quetico Provincial Park; and
- d) daily entry quotas at the southern entry points be reduced if necessary, to reduce overuse of the southerly portion of Quetico Provincial Park.

Minister's Response :

a) *Not accepted.*

*It may be necessary to implement a preferential quota system in the future. This step does not appear warranted at this time since entry quotas have been rarely filled at the northern ranger stations, which are the traditional points of entry for Ontario residents.*

b) *Accepted with the following clarification.*

*The short term reservation system applied during 1981 and 1982 will be continued in the 1983 operating season. However, this will be subject to review and revision to improve our service to the public.*

c) *Not accepted.*

*This will be addressed in conjunction with the selection of a ranger station on the eastern boundary of the park during the next review of the Master Plan.*



d) *Accepted with the following clarification.*

*Quotas at the southern ranger stations will be reduced if overcrowding or environmental deterioration are indicated through research and monitoring.*

### Recommendation No. 3 :

Council resolved to recommend to the Minister of Natural Resources that an immediate assessment and revision be undertaken with respect to the current literature available to visitors to Quetico Provincial Park to assure that:

- a) The literature provides the necessary education to the visitor to permit,
  - i) the interpretation of the natural, historical and cultural aspects of Quetico;
  - ii) communication to or provision of the orientation necessary for an appreciation of the wilderness use ethic; and
- b) the literature provides a link between the Atikokan area and Quetico Provincial Park to provide further support for the continued development of a tourist industry in the Atikokan area.

### Minister's Response :

a) / b) *Accepted with the following clarification.*

*This process is ongoing and will continue with a view to providing the public with the most current information concerning the park's resources and management objectives. Marketing strategies, being developed for all provincial parks, recognize the important contribution of parks to tourism in the province and to the development of this industry at the local level.*

### Recommendation No. 4 :

Council resolved to recommend to the Minister of Natural Resources that canoe party size in Quetico Provincial Park be reduced to a maximum of 6 with a maximum of two parties permitted to travel together at any time. It is the intention that there be continued regulation permitting only one party per site when camping.

### Minister's Response :

*Accepted.*

### Recommendation No. 5 :

Council resolved to recommend to the Minister of Natural Resources that the transfer of traplines within Quetico Provincial Park be discontinued after May 31st, 1985, save and except with respect to members of the Lac La Croix Indian Band, who may continue so long as the provisions of The Game and Fish Act and Park regulations are observed.

### Minister's Response :

*Accepted with the following clarification.*

*This is recognized as an interim step in the ultimate exclusion of all trapping activities from within the park. In order to allow for an adequate period of adjustment for trappers who are not members of the Lac La Croix Indian Band, the discontinuation of trapline transfers will not be implemented prior to May 31, 1986.*

### Recommendation No. 6 :

Council, in keeping with the wilderness designation of Quetico Provincial Park, continues to support the principle of the exclusion of mechanical forms of transportation within the park, but has been persuaded to recommend two practical exemptions to the ban on motorized travel in Quetico Provincial Park, save and except as now currently exists with respect to trapping. Council therefore resolved to recommend to the Minister of Natural Resources that:

- a) to assist Ontario and Canada in gaining more tourism and therefore more economic benefits from Quetico Provincial Park, float plane landings continue to be permitted at Beaverhouse Lake and Lac La Croix and that one additional southern entry point at Prairie Portage be opened for aircraft landings;





- b) to recognize the integrity of and the manner in which the Lac La Croix Indian Band has maintained and conducted its social and economic affairs, a member of the Lac La Croix Indian Band, who is also a member of the Lac La Croix Guides Association, be permitted to continue to operate power boats with an engine rating not exceeding 10 h.p. on waters adjacent to the reservation that can be traversed for the purpose of fishing on a day use basis without substantial portaging or without airlifts, which waters are more particularly identified as Wolseley, Tanner, Minn, McAree Lakes and the Maligne River from Lac La Croix to Tanner Lake;
- c) to further assist the Lac La Croix Indian Band, but to recognize the primary obligation to limit the environmental influence and impact of any non - conforming uses within the park, members of the Lac La Croix Indian Band, who are also members of the Lac La Croix Indian Guides Association, be permitted to continue to operate power boats with an engine rating not exceeding 10 h.p. on Beaverhouse and Quetico Lakes until January 1st, 1983; and
- d) with further consideration for the economic situation of the Lac La Croix Indians, the Minister of Natural Resources use his best auspices to support any representations made to the Government of the United States of America to remove the ban on the use of outboard motors and to permit the use of outboard motors of at least 10 h.p. for members of the Lac La Croix Indian Band on that portion of Lac La Croix within the boundaries of the United States of America.

**Minister's Response :**

*a) Not accepted.*

*Aircraft, landing on Lac La Croix, will be allowed to dock at the ranger station facilities as has been the practice in the past. Permitting aircraft to land at Prairie Portage would be inconsistent with the intent of removing all motorized travel from within Quetico (Recommendation 1 (b) ). Similarly, aircraft access at Beaverhouse Lake will be discontinued following improvement to the existing access road from Highway 11 to the park boundary. While this condition is a prerequisite to the implementation of a restriction on aircraft landings, the restriction will not be imposed prior to April 1, 1986 at the earliest.*

*b) Accepted.*

*c) Accepted with the following clarification.*

*This is consistent with the long term intent of eliminating motorized uses within the park. However, implementation will be postponed until April 1, 1986 to allow for an adequate period of adjustment.*

*d) Accepted with the following clarification.*

*This is a Federal Government matter. However, I will make representation to the Federal Government advising them of the Parks Council's concern.*

**Recommendation No. 7 :**

Council resolved to strongly recommend to the Minister of Natural Resources that the management plans recommended by the Master Plan for Quetico Provincial Park be completed at this time and that until such management plans have been completed and approved, informal or interim management plans currently being pursued be documented for interim guidance.

**Minister's Response :**

*Accepted.*

**Recommendation No. 8 :**

Council resolved that it recommend to the Minister of Natural Resources that the impact of the precipitous reduction of the water level of French Lake, with its resulting adverse affect on the swimming beach be ameliorated by returning French Lake to a level closer to its original level and thereafter reducing the level of the Lake to the ultimate desired level over a period of years with a view to preserving an acceptable swimming beach.



**Minister's Response :**

*Not accepted.*

*The silt conditions experienced by swimmers at French Lake during the 1981 season are considered a temporary condition. Water levels have been lowered gradually since 1975 towards the original and natural level. The shoreline is adjusting naturally to this lowering and a satisfactory swimming beach will be available for visitors. My staff will monitor the situation and, should the silty conditions persist, corrective action will be taken.*

**Recommendation No. 9 :**

The French Lake access zone has served not only as a point of entry for wilderness visitors to Quetico Provincial Park, but also as a facility for car camping and day use. This latter activity has continued as a non - conforming use and was to have been allowed to operate only until such time as alternatives could be developed outside the Park. In re - assessing this policy, it has become evident to Council that an alternative site is not economically or geographically feasible in terms of accessibility to Highway 11 and Atikokan. **Council** therefore resolved to recommend to the Minister of Natural Resources that:

- a) the boundaries of Quetico Provincial Park be redefined to exclude the French Lake access zone;
- b) the former French Lake access zone be established and classified as a Historical Park;
- c) the administration and management of the new Historical Park be consolidated under the present administration and management of Quetico Provincial Park.

The **Council** sees such recommendations, not only as a solution to the current non - conforming dilemma, but as providing a number of intended advantages, including:

- a) full development of the significant historical position of the Dawson Trail;
- b) a park classification which permits facility development more consistent with campground, day use and interpretive activities;
- c) a Historical Park in a strategic location where it could be a potential corner stone for the development of tourism, educational facilities and research interest;
- d) a Historical Park which invites the possibility of co - operative planning, development, staffing and funding in conjunction with other Ministries such as the Ministry of Culture and Recreation, the Ministry of Industry and Tourism and the Ministry of Northern Affairs; and
- e) the development of significant car camping, day use and interpretive facilities utilizing in part the modest facilities which presently exist.

This motion was not carried unanimously and Council Member, Mr. Charles Hunt, registered a dissenting vote and a minority report as follows:

"My reasons for a dissenting vote on a motion to remove French Lake from Quetico Provincial Park and establish it as a separate Historical Provincial Park are as follows:

- a) French Lake and its associated campground have always been an integral and important part of Quetico Provincial Park. Further, nothing can change its physical location;
- b) the changing of boundaries and classification will only be changes on paper and are therefore only an exercise in academics to conform to what are considered suitable uses. It would seem to me that the present recognition of its facilities as being non - conforming should adequately cover the proposed plans noted above. In this regard, I feel that setting French Lake up as a historical zone within Quetico Provincial Park would go a long way to satisfying so - called permissible uses;
- c) in many respects, I feel like the person in the wheelchair in this year of the disabled. I do not want to be excluded from society because I am different. Therefore, why should French Lake be excluded because it is different;





- d) in my opinion, the separation of French Lake from Quetico Provincial Park would inevitably involve extra administrative costs. Similarly, I do not believe that extra money would be available from the Ministry of Natural Resources or other Ministries as suggested simply because the French Lake access zone is removed from Quetico Provincial Park;
- e) I believe that the general public will find it difficult to accept the reasoning behind separation and would be astonished and puzzled on looking at a map that showed two separate Provincial Parks that are physically joined together. The inevitable comment would be "typical government bungling";
- f) I would hasten to add that apart from separation, I am in agreement with the suggested uses of French Lake as outlined in the Motion."

**Minister's Response :**

- a) b) c) *Not accepted*

*The Dawson Trail Campground at French Lake will continue to be operated as a non - conforming use in terms of the overall management policies for a wilderness class provincial park. In addition, where necessary, improvements will be undertaken to ensure public safety, environmental protection and to enhance the visitor's experience.*

**Recommendation No. 10 :**

Council resolved to recommend to the Minister of Natural Resources a differential camping fee of at least the following:

- a) \$ 6.00 per night per canoe for all parties of Ontario residents and Ontario outfitters;
- b) \$ 8.00 per night per canoe for parties of Canadian residents; and
- c) \$ 12.00 per night per canoe for parties of persons not resident in Canada.

**Minister's Response**

- a) b) c) *Not accepted.*

*The option of imposing some form of differential camping fee structure is being considered. However, any form of revision will be made in conjunction with fee structure adjustments to the overall provincial park system.*

**Recommendation No. 11 :**

Council further resolved to recommend to the Minister of Natural Resources that:

- a) an annual review of camping fees be undertaken to ensure that revenues recovered represent at least 60 % of operating costs;
- b) Ontario outfitters who pay the reservation deposit on behalf of a party leader receive an official receipt, acknowledging the outfitter's payment on behalf of a named party leader, which receipt would permit the outfitter to subsequently purchase the interior camping permit for the party.

**Minister's Response:**

- a) *Accepted with the following clarification.*

*The fee structure for provincial parks is reviewed annually with a view to recovering a proportion of the overall operating expenditures. However, from year to year, the recoverable percentage for an individual park may vary.*



*b) Accepted with the following clarification.*

*There is a need to continually review and improve our service to the public. To this end, my staff will be assessing the reservation procedures and will modify them accordingly.*

## **Recommendation No. 12 :**

**Council** resolved to recommend to the Minister of Natural Resources that, in view of the commitment to the management of Quetico Provincial Park to ensure the purity of the air and the water and in view of the public's continuing concern with respect to the potential danger as a result of the construction of the Ontario Hydro thermo generating plant within close proximity to Quetico Provincial Park, the Ministry of Natural Resources be and remain involved in a monitoring program to determine the presence and effect of air borne pollutants from industry and be prepared to use the Ministry's best efforts to insist upon all steps to prevent any deterioration of the air and water quality of Quetico Provincial Park if the monitoring should indicate the possibility of such deterioration.

### **Minister's Response:**

*Accepted with the following clarification.*

*Studies undertaken to date indicate that the Ontario Hydro's Atikokan generating station will not adversely affect the park environment. However, I acknowledge the Council's concern and will ensure that continued co - operation is extended to Ontario Hydro and the Ministry of Environment in their ongoing monitoring programs. The latter must, of course, be consistent with the wilderness management objectives for the park. If unacceptable environmental conditions are observed, I will make appropriate representations.*

## **Recommendation No. 13 :**

**Council** resolved to strongly recommend to the Minister of Natural Resources that Quetico Provincial Park be maintained as a Wilderness Park pursuant to the current park classifications as recognized in the Ontario Provincial Parks Policy.

### **Minister's Response:**

*Accepted.*

*I fully support the continued classification of Quetico Provincial Park as a wilderness park and subsequent management in accordance with provincial parks policies.*

## **Recommendation No. 14 :**

**Council** resolved to recommend to the Minister of Natural Resources that the park goal as set out under Park Policy in the Master Plan for Quetico Provincial Park be amended to provide that:

*"The goal is to preserve Quetico Provincial Park, which contains a natural environment of recreational, historical and biological significance, in perpetuity for the people of Ontario as an area of wilderness that is not adversely affected by human activities."*

### **Minister's Response:**

*Accepted with the following clarification.*

*I agree with this recommendation and will further amend the goal statement as follows:*

*"The goal is to preserve Quetico Provincial Park which contains an environment of geological, biological, cultural and recreational significance, in perpetuity for the people of Ontario as an area of wilderness that is not adversely affected by human activities."*





**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:**

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